

Passing the Baton

Lady O - 2021 Leaders' Retreat

A relay race is a racing competition where members of a team take turns completing parts of a racecourse or performing a certain action. Each runner is gifted to perform a strategic task of the race based on their skills and abilities. The race consists of a set number of stages (legs), usually four, each leg run by a different member of the team. When the runner finishes one leg, he or she is required to pass on a baton to the next runner while both are running in a marked exchange zone. The legs are usually equal distances for each runner but have different goals and challenges.

The baton is usually plastic or a hollow cylinder of wood. It is carried by a runner and must be exchanged in the marked exchange zone.

I. Leadership is a race with legs to run.

No matter how good or essential a leader is or has been, there are limits to his or her service.

- Moses & Joshua – Numbers 27:22-23; Deuteronomy 31:14
- Elijah & Elisha – 2 Kings 2:1, 9,12-13
- Jesus & The Twelve – John 20:21
- Paul & Timothy – 2 Timothy 2:2; 4:1-2, 6-8

II. Like a relay, leadership must have an exchange zone.

“A good pass of the baton of leadership is as crucial to any organization as it is in track and field relays.”

Tom Mullins (Passing the Leadership Baton)

Passing the baton requires:

- Planning
- Preparation
- Proper timing or pace
- Passing the baton in the “exchange zone”

“It is better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret.”

Jackie Joyner-Kersey

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III. Baton passing in leadership has a proven process.

Leaders should always look to add new runners to our Dream Team. God always has someone prepared to run the next leg. Here's the process:

- Identifying

Be intentional about observing potential in your group or ministry. Look for someone who has good character, is faithful, eager to be discipled, and very relational. Names must be submitted to the Senior Pastors for approval.

- Recruiting

Invite someone to join you in leadership training affirming their value and gifting, sharing your passion for leading, and placing confidence in their gifts, skills, and past experiences.

- Involving

Each ministry or group should have a training manual for orientating new runners. Practice the four stages: 1) I do. You watch. We talk. 2) I do. You help. We talk. 3) You do. I help. We talk. 4) You do. I watch. We talk. Give them access to the team for bonding and practice.

- Connecting

The aim is to connect new runners to leadership and those they will lead. Connect them to the Dream Team meetings (Leadership Roundtable, the Leadership Retreat, and other leadership events).

- Releasing

When the time comes, set up a meeting with the Pastors for approval. Support them with coaching, cheering, and constructive criticism. Be available to help and assess them quarterly.

IV. Concluding Thoughts

Passing the baton requires:

- Always remember leadership is a relay race, not a marathon.
- Run your leg well to encourage the next leg's success.
- The baton is not yours to keep. It's yours to pass.
- Winning takes more than running your leg.
- God's ministry must continue beyond you and your leg.
- A successful ministry must have succession to be a success.